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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to determine if second grade teachers use gender biased literature and if these teachers are unintentionally sending biased messages to their students. Sixty-two second grade students and their three teachers were included in this study. The study was conducted in an upper-middle-class suburban elementary school. Several reading lessons were observed by the researcher. It was found that the literature used (from the "Garden Gates" series published by Silver Burdett Ginn) was not gender biased. The researcher also took note of the amount of times boys versus girls were called upon by the teacher. Generally, boys and girls were called upon equally. Teachers believed that both boys and girls are, overall, good readers. The students also participated in this study by completing a questionnaire. None of the boys responded that they liked to read or hear stories about girls who are heroes; a majority of the girls responded that they like to read or hear stories about girls who are heroes. Contains 27 references. Appendixes contain survey instruments and observation forms. (Author/RS)

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Gender Inequities in Grade Two: A Look at Educators and Literature

By

Gina Augello

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts

Kean University
May, 2000

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Abstract

A study was conducted to determine if second grade teachers use gender biased literature and if these teachers are unintentionally sending biased messages to their students. Sixty-two second grade students and their three teachers were included in this study. The study was conducted in an upper middle class suburban elementary school.

Several reading lessons were observed by the researcher. It was found that the literature used was not gender biased. The researcher also took note of the amount of times boys versus girls were called upon. Generally, boys and girls were called upon equally. Teachers believed that both boys and girls are overall, good readers.

The students also participated in this study by completing a questionnaire. None of the boys responded that they liked to read or hear stories about girls who are heroes; a majority of the girls responded that they like to read or hear stories about girls who are heroes.

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Today's society is an ever-changing one. Traditional male and female roles seem to be a thing of the past. Yet, some of these traditions have remained intertwined with the newer, expected gender roles. Males, while expected to continue the leadership role, are also expected to have a sensitive side. Females, while expected to continue the traditional nurturing role, are also expected to show a stronger, tougher side. Are teachers helping students to break gender barriers?

Mem Fox found, as many adults would suspect, that literature used in the classroom also has an influence upon students' thoughts (1993). Fox is a proponent of teaching gender equity through literature. Books, stories, poems, etc. need to show students that working to one's full potential may also mean going beyond traditional gender behavior and attitude.

Jett-Simpson and Masland (1993) are also in agreement with Fox that teachers should provide a variety of choices of literature for their students. In a study done by Jett-Simpson and Masland, they found when left up to elementary school children, a story (with plot focusing on baseball) with an open ending, had girls concluding that girls can be aggressive and can play baseball if they were good enough; and had boys concluding that girls can play but only if they practiced and if the boys let the girls play. Again the authors realize that gender appropriate literature is part of the answer to breaking gender barriers.

McAuliffe (1994) sees the same types of problems. She believes that another way, other than literature, to dissolve gender bias in the classroom is for

and female authors. The teacher should also "set up social structures that encourages learners to try to understand one another." Temple (1993) agrees with this aspect. He encourages teachers to take an active role in challenging their students to be active, not passive readers. He advocates that teachers discuss gender roles/problems in stories. Do children have to accept that in fairy tales males are strong and courageous and females who are helpless and in distress still look pretty in their dresses? No, says Temple. Educators should teach children to argue with what they read, hear, and see.

How can society break through gender roles and help students work to their full potential? Leung (1990) did a study to find out "aspiring parents' and teachers' academic beliefs about young children". These beliefs, aspirations, and expectations for young children are an important source of influence on children's academic achievements. Results tended to be concurrent with traditional gender roles; for example, aspiring parents' and teachers' stated that physical education was more interesting and more important for boys than for girls, while social studies was rated as more interesting and more important for girls than for boys.

Cahill and Adams (1997) contradict the above. They found that early childhood teachers had non-traditional beliefs about gender roles and the socialization of children. Interestingly, however, it was found that teachers of young children accepted non-traditional gender roles for females but were less accepting of the same for males.

Sadker (1999) discusses how to ensure equitable education for both genders. First, educators must be aware of their own behavior in the classroom. Often subtle words, gestures, attitudes, etc. are displayed by teachers unknowingly. They must be

pointed out and corrected. Teachers and administrators need to ensure that instructional strategies and curriculum goals benefit all students. This, along with educating parents, is the place to start the ending of gender inequities in the schools.

Hypothesis

For the purposes of this study, it was hypothesized that teachers are unintentionally sending signals to their students about traditional gender roles by using literature in the classroom which often has males as heroes and females in distress, leading students to formulate ideas of traditional gender roles and behaviors.

Procedures

For the purposes of this study, sixty-two second grade students and their three teachers were the subjects. The participants attended an upper-middle class suburban K-8 elementary school in central New Jersey. Questionnaires were given to the students as well as their teachers, however, the questions themselves were different for each group (students received one set, teachers another).

The researcher developed the questionnaires. The researcher also observed twelve reading lessons (four of each class) and completed a questionnaire for each lesson observed. Although the instructions were self–explanatory, the instructions were explained to all students and teachers. After completing the questionnaire, the students and teachers returned them to the researcher. The information obtained was analyzed to find out if there were gender stereotypes in second grade classrooms and if teachers and the literature they used may have insinuated gender biases.

Results

The study of the three teacher activities in the language arts literacy academic area indicated that all used different selections during this period from the Garden Gates series published by Silver Burdett Ginn.

Observations of these lessons indicated that male pupils were called upon one hundred twenty-six times during the average of one hundred sixty minutes of instruction, while female pupils were called upon one hundred five times, that male pupils were reprimanded nineteen times, while female pupils were reprimanded twenty three times.

The literature read included seven female and five male main characters. Of these only one female character was identified as being a weak character at the start of the story and that this character changed to be a strong character by the end of the story.

Upon completion of the teacher survey the results were as follows:

	boys	girls	both
Who do you think are better readers?	0	1	2
What is the total number of students in the classes?	62		
	boys	girls	both
How many boys are better readers?	13		
How girls are better readers?		16	
Do you think the books used in your class are gender biased?	2 no	1 yes	

Who do you call on more frequently? 3

Upon completion of the student survey, to which twenty-nine boys responded, the results were as follows:

	boys	girls	both
Who do you think is better at reading?	7	1	21
Who do you think behaves better in class?	8	5	16
Who do you think gets in trouble more by your teacher?	8	9	12

	yes	no	sometimes
Do you like to read or hear stories about girls who are heroes?	0	22	7
Do you like to read or hear stories about boys who are heroes?	23	3	3
Do you think it is okay for a girl to play sports?	38	6	12
Do you think it is okay for a boy to take dance lessons?	7	13	9

Upon completion of the student survey, to which twenty-eight girls responded, the results were as follows:

	boys	girls	both
Who do you think is better at reading?	0	6	22
Who do you think behaves better in class?	0	22	6
Who do you think gets in trouble more by your teacher?	21	0	7

	yes	no	sometimes
Do you like to read or hear stories about girls who are heroes?	10	6	12
Do you like to read or hear stories about boys who are heroes?	2	12	14
Do you think it is okay for a girl to play sports?	28	0	0
Do you think it is okay for a boy to take dance lessons?	17	4	7

Conclusions

According to this study, the results do not validate the hypothesis; these teachers were not using literature which was skewed toward a gender bias. Of the three teachers surveyed two believe that both males and females are generally better readers (better meaning reads fluently and comprehension is above average), while one teacher believes that overall, girls are better readers. This coincides with the more traditional belief of females excelling in the language arts areas. However, when asked the same question, but specifically regarding their present students, in total, teachers responded that sixteen girls are the better readers compared to thirteen boys being better readers.

Mem Fox (1993) found that many literature pieces are gender biased. However, two of the three teachers surveyed believe the books they use are not gender biased, although one of the teachers does believe the books are biased. All of the teachers use the same literature series.

All participating teachers believe they call on both male and female students equally. This belief conflicts with Leung's (1990) study, which found aspiring teachers to have biases amongst their academic beliefs towards young children. It should be noted however, that Leung's study was done with aspiring teachers and this particular study was completed by experienced teachers.

It is interesting to compare the boys' results to the girls'. None of the girls surveyed believe that girls are better at reading than girls and within the same line of thought, only one boy believed that girls are better readers. Most of the boys and girls believed that both genders are good readers.

None of the boys responded that they like to read or hear stories about girls who are heroes, yet combined, twenty-two responded that yes or sometimes, it is okay for a girl to play sports. This is a related issue because girls who play sports are often thought of as more outgoing or having stronger personalities and the same traits would be attributed to female heroes; yet the responses were quite varied. It would be a guess that while males are conditioned or used to actually seeing or playing with girls in sports, to read about a strong female character would be an unusual occurance.

Most of the girls responded that they do like to read or hear stories about girls who are heroes and all of them responded that it is okay for a girl to play sports. It should be noted however, that six of the female respondents said they do not like to read or hear stories about girls who are heroes.

Half of the girls responded that they do like to read or hear stories about boys who are heroes, but twelve also responded that they do not. It would be interesting to

find out the girls' general attitude towards boys, as this would probably affect their position on reading/hearing about male heroes. Bauer, Liebel, and Stennes (1998) did a study and found that by four and one-half years of age males and females had knowledge of opposite and same sex stereotypes. This statement reflects an attitude the researcher observed when giving the survey to the students. The researcher read each question aloud and the students circled the answer they believed to be most appropriate. When the question, "Do you think it is okay for a girl to play sports?" was read children silently circled their response; however, when the question, "Do you think it is okay for a boy to take dance lessons?" was read there was a lot of giggling and shaking of heads. Seventeen of the girls and seven of the boys believed it was okay; thirteen of the boys and four of the girls said it was not okay; nine of the boys and seven of the girls said it was okay only sometimes. These results may reflect the changing times of today's society but also show a double standard. Cahill and Adams' (1997) study supports this theory. They found early childhood teachers to be accepting of non-traditional roles for girls but not for boys. These authors believe that teachers' personal beliefs are reflected in the classroom. This may be true in the primary grades also. These students found it acceptable for girls to play sports, but generally unacceptable for boys to take dance lessons. Is society sending mixed signals to their young?

Implications

An implication that should be recognized is that although teacher response indicated a total of sixty-two students, only fifty-seven completed the survey. This is

due to student absences. Also, it is only assumed that student responses were true and honest; although copying answers was not noticed, it could have very well happened.

Future research can investigate whether age and experience in the education field plays a role in gender bias in the classroom. As indicated earlier two of the three teachers surveyed believe that both males and females are equal readers, but one teacher did believe that females are the better readers. This happens to be the eldest and the one with the most experience. It would be interesting to see if her viewpoint is reflected in her teaching. Another research area would be to do a similar survey in other academic areas, such as science and math, in which males are traditionally superior. This would extend the findings of this current study, which was limited to the language arts literacy area.

Gender Inequities in Grade Two: Related Literature

Society today calls for more demand from their students. Parents and teachers expect proper behavior, cooperation and the utmost absorption of knowledge to occur. It is widely accepted that females can be scientists and males can be nurses, both professions which have a specific gender link to them, or is it accepted? There is a question among American society; is there a gender gap in our schools? Maggie Ford (1999) claims there is. Although women outnumber men in higher education, it is because it "takes a college degree for a woman to earn the same as a man with a high school degree." In high schools, girls are taking classes like word processing, while boys are taking computer word programming, which is considered a higher level course. Ford believes this is happening because girls have lower confidence in their ability of working with computers. This leads to a limitation of career choices later in life. In order to overcome this problem, society must provide females with opportunities and role models who have succeeded in "fields once considered off limits."

Not everyone is in agreement with these beliefs. Ravitch (1999) claims that girls are not limited in their high schools courses. "Girls have higher enrollment than boys in Algebra I, Algebra II and Geometry and also Biology and Chemistry." Girls are performing better academically, which enables them to go to college, which leads to better job opportunities. Ravitch states that "thirty-nine percent of medical degrees are earned by women and forty-three percent of law degrees are earned by women." Ravitch believes the focus should be on the racial gap, not the gender gap.

Beginning as early as four and a half years old, children are able to make inferences based on appearance as to whether something is female or male oriented. Bauer, Liebel, and Stennes did a study involving twenty-four four and a half year old preschoolers. Children examined a doll which had its' clothing changed from traditional female clothing (ruffled blouse) to traditional male clothing (pants, suspenders). Children were also told of various occupations (hairdresser, carpenter) and then had to state if it was girl's job or a boy's job. From this study, the authors concluded that "both boys and girls have a knowledge of opposite and same sex stereotypes." It was also found that four and a half year old boys are "more highly stereotyped than females"; meaning boys seem to avoid opposite sex toys (i.e. dolls) than girls. This is mostly due to parental, teacher and peer influence. "Children come to gender type a great many things."

Mem Fox (1993) found that children's literature also has a great influence upon students' thoughts. Fox, being a children's author herself, writes books that contain strong, independent, risk-taking females. By doing this, all students should realize they can work to their full potential, even if that means going beyond traditional gender behavior and attitude. Jeff-Simpson and Masland (1993) support Fox's ideas. They worked with elementary school children: they gave an open-ended story whose theme was baseball, and had the children finish it. Most girls completed the story stating girls could play baseball, only if good enough. Most boys completed the story by stating girls can only play if they practiced and if the boys let them play. One way to resolve

this issue is to include a variety and abundance of "gender appropriate" literature. McAuliffe (1994) believes not only are proper literature materials necessary, but teachers must also work to create that type of gender breaking environment. One way is to have books written by both male and female authors. Temple (1993) in agreement with this also believes teachers should encourage students to argue and discuss what they read to become "active, not passive readers." If a female is portrayed as helpless, have students rewrite the story to their preference. This can work for boys, also, if males always come to the rescue, have the boys reconstruct the story. Educators should encourage children to discuss and rethink what they read, hear and see.

Leung (1990) did a study to find out if the gender of a young child would influence aspiring parents' and teachers' attitude toward them. Leung found that aspiring parents and teachers felt social studies was more important for girls than for boys. Physical education was deemed more important and more interesting for boys than for girls. This is consistent with the traditional idea that males are more competitive and aggressive compared to females. "If males are socialized to be competitive and aggressive more than females, than one might argue that it is adults' beliefs, expectations and behaviors towards children that may account for differential involvement in sports activities between the two sexes." These findings suggest that as far as academic beliefs on young children, we have not achieved gender equality.

Cahill and Adams (1997) surveyed one hundred and three early childhood teachers to find if their own adult gender role beliefs relate to young children's' gender role behaviors. It was found that the teachers indicated strong beliefs towards nontraditional sex roles for girls, however, they were not accepting of nontraditional behaviors for boys. This finding was important since "it has been repeatedly shown that teachers' personal beliefs affect their attitudes about classroom practice." The authors believe that teacher preparation programs should include gender identity formation and development.

Sadker (1999) has been a long-time proponent of equitable education for both genders. Sadker is a professor who does educate future teachers about gender fairness. He carefully points out (through video use) subtle and most likely unintentional bias messages teachers are sending their students. "Although bias is less problematic today, it still permeates and influences our classrooms." Sadker suggests that educators must first be aware of their own behavior in the classroom. Teachers and administrators also need to ensure that instructional strategies and curriculum goals/objectives benefit all students. Also suggested is educating parents, since parents are also a heavy influence on children. With parents, administrators, educators, and even bias-free literature available to students, gender barriers can be broken.

Many people believe that girls need heroines to read about. Kathleen Odean (1997) feels so strongly about this that she compiled a list of six hundred books about

girls who defy the stereotypes about females in our culture. Literature featuring female(s) as the main character(s) often focuses on jealousy between friends, while literature featuring males often shows easy companionship between friends. Educators and parents can help to rectify this situation by reading to their children books about strong females. Males will also be interested in these books; if presented the right way, most children will want to read.

Bauermeister and Smith (1997) know that books hold much power over their readers. They too, have found three hundred and seventy-five inspiring books for females. These books have girls meeting challenges, making discoveries, recognizing and following their dreams, etc. Sadker and Sadker (1994) also believe that sexism starts at an early age and also happens in our schools. It was found that boys have a low opinion of what it means to be a girl. Eleven hundred school children in Michigan were told to write about what life would be like if they were of the opposite sex. Ninety-five percent of the boys saw no advantages, but mostly disadvantages, of being a girl.

Forty-two percent of the girls felt that they would be more confident, be treated more respectfully and would earn more money if they were boys. The Sadkers also found that although boys are twelve times more likely to call out in class, teachers reprimanded girls for doing the same more often. In order to make our society and education system fair and equal, it must begin with parents, then our educators,

administrators, our lawmakers and civic leaders. When these citizens join forces, women will be "prepared to be full partners in all activities of the next century and beyond."

A study commissioned by AAUW Educational Foundation (American Association of University Women) and researched by the Wellesley College Center for Research on Women (1992) found that gender stereotyping starts from birth, with hospital nurseries issuing pink and blue tags to females and males respectively. By the time children are six or seven they have clear ideas about gender. These ideas of course are based on what they see around them. Research suggests that girls need to be encouraged to participate in large motor activities. Teachers also must look closely at how they relate to girls versus boys. Often teachers are not always aware of their own behavior in the classroom. This is critical. The use of equitable teaching techniques should be part of the basis of teacher performance evaluations.

Teaching about gender equity in teacher education programs should be implemented in all universities/colleges. Sanders (1997) is a proponent of encouraging girls, as well as boys to fulfill their potential without restriction. The idea that males excel in mathematics, science and technology, while females excel in the arts, has been passed down through many generations. These unintended messages often imply to girls and boys that there are career fields in which they cannot be successful because of their sex. In 1996 the U.S. Department of Education's Gender Equity Expert Panel

began to design a program that would promote gender equity in teacher education programs. Professional publications are now beginning to cover gender equity issues and professional meetings are devoting some time to it.

Streitmatter (1994) found there are difference between teachers' beliefs and practices, which may possibly stem from educational institutions, which contribute to the formation of beliefs and practices. Individual teachers can and do combat these inequities resulting from gender socialization. One way is to look at higher education leadership (Chliwniak, 1997). Only sixteen percent of college and university women are presidents, yet women make up more than fifty-two percent of the student body. Higher education leadership needs to be more reflective of the people it serves. The women who are in leadership roles need to be aware when inequities are happening and when it impedes the campus performance. Change must happen first within the institutions; once sexual harassment, wage gaps, etc. are challenged then effective change can happen.

Gender stereotyping in academic areas often includes males performing highly in science, females plainly not. Rop (1998) looked into why this is. Classroom culture has much to do with it. Something as simple as single gender laboratory groups implies traditional sex roles, male technicians and female scribes. Teacher created supportive atmospheres can help girls excel in science, take risks. Teachers can do this simply by encouraging girls, by incorporating group work (not individual, competitive work) and

also by avoiding gender-related phrases, such as "tackle problems" or "carry the ball". These suggestions and others will help to give girls more positive experiences in the sciences and will encourage them to pursue science careers.

There are multiple positions on the role teachers can and should address concerning gender issues (Singh, 1998). Some teachers believe gender differences are biological, some believe it is social, some believe it is a combination of both. In light of this Singh believes educators should prepare students for gender neutral roles, and also should help students decide for themselves if they wish to conform to these roles. However the teachers' own level of comfort will influence their behavior towards gender roles. Educators do need to promote sensitivity to gender specific behaviors. They also need to realize that there are often more differences within each gender group then between them.

Lawrence (1995) describes one way to approach gender issues is to work with students at looking into old literature with a new perspective. This author, who is also a teacher, encourages writing, talking and even arguing gender questions; through this, students are able to clarify their own thinking. Facing students' questions directly is a way to force the concern of gender inequities and help turn them into educational experiences that foster gender equity.

Teachers obviously are a huge influence on their students. Yet, many are not aware that they are sending subtle gender bias messages (Marshall and Reinhartz,

1997) to their students. One way to attack this is to have teachers work with colleagues/other teachers. The authors suggest teachers get together to discuss changes, examine each other's behaviors, and act as coaches to practice and retain new instructional strategies. Having a variety of literature is another positive effort an educator can make; along with solving problems in cooperative learning groups and by playing games from around the world via computer. Teachers must provide opportunities for all students to be actively involved in their learning and also provide opportunities for all students to assume leadership roles. A sense of fairness is very important to elementary school students. Matthews and others (1998) found this to be so in their study of a fifth grade classroom. After two days of observation, the authors found that they knew three boys' names and only one girls' name. They also found boys called out more, (and was accepted by teachers) than girls and teachers often referred to all students as "guys". A survey was also given to the students. Boys generally answered a boy was better at all academic areas, whereas girls generally answered a girl was better in English, but either a boy or a girl was better in math, science and social studies. Students did have tips for teachers on creating equitable environments, one of them being, when calling on students for answers, rotate boy-girl, to make it fair.

Children's literature also has a large role in gender role (Singh, 1998). How each male and female is portrayed in a book contributes to the image children develop of male to female roles. It was found that the lack of girl characters in texts could restrict

the chances for girls to identify with their gender and even to identify their place in society. Stereotypes can also pressure boys and girls to behave in ways that are "gender appropriate" but may not be suited to their personality. The author suggests that teachers look for books and stories that do not portray either gender in a stereotypical manner. Books that contain females or males in a non-traditional role may encourage the reader to re-examine their gender beliefs, thus providing alternative role models and inspiring a more important bias free gender attitude. It is important to remember that rethinking gender roles is an ongoing process, not something to be achieved in one day.

Commeyras and others (1997) did a study of teachers' attitude toward gender issues in literature. They found many educators were open to knowing about gender issues in literacy education. Most of the respondents to this survey were female. However these educators were not enthusiastic toward using a non-traditional text in discussing male/female roles. They believed it would be too controversial to involve students in discussions about sexist language and same-sex identification with fictional characters. Although much has been written recently on addressing cultural diversity, the authors suggest a study to be done on women and men's accomplishments throughout the curriculum. It is believed that these accomplishments are not part of the educational mainstream.

Turner-Bowker (1996) did a study focusing on the main character in literature, specifically "gender stereotyped descriptors. The purpose was to examine the subtle

effects of gender stereotyping in children's literature. The literature examined was limited to thirty Caldecott Medal and Honor books. The author did state that stereotypes often oversimplify and exaggerate attributions of certain groups. During the 1970's publishers agreed to make changes in texts, scripts, and pictures in children's books; however, male characters still appear more often in titles, illustrations, and central roles more often than females. On a more positive note, there has been an increase over the last two decades of female characters in titles, illustrations and central roles. This study also found that female characters are often in a passive, domestic and limited role, while male characters thrive in active, dominating roles. Another interesting find was that different adjectives were used to describe males and females. For example, males were often described as powerful and active, while females were often described as beautiful, sweet, worthy and weak. A suggestion was offered by Turner-Bowker, to editors, publishers, directors, producers, teachers, parents and to those in positions of power, to take the responsibility to make positive, non-stereotyping changes.

Alvermann-Commeyras (1994) took on the literature aspect through a different route. They studied content area texts in middle, junior, and high school classrooms. It was found that information in these texts is often presented in a way that positions males and females unequally. Only during the last decade have females had a greater presence in texts. Women were frequently discussed during topics of social institutions (marriage) and social movements (suffragists); they were rarely discussed during topics

of political and economic themes. The authors have several ideas to alleviate the problem and to allow students to realize they can break through gender barriers. One way is through simple discussions. Have students work together to critically examine textbooks for information they can use in discussions that include multiple perspectives. Teachers might have students work in small groups first, then move on to whole group discussion. The authors decided to study this topic because it is their belief that textbook content and language do influence student thinking and talking.

It is often said that girls perform better in the language arts areas, while boys perform better in the math and science areas. Andre and others (1997) did a descriptive study to examine pupil vs. parent attitudes in the above mentioned academic areas. The study focused on students in grade K-6. They did find that girls performed better in reading, boys better in physical science. Both boys and girls equally enjoyed science, but girls liked reading more than boys did. It was also found that parents thought science was more important for boys than for girls; and both boys and girls viewed science related careers as male dominated. The authors found that parents are a big factor of influence over their children; therefore, these perceptions must stem from the home and develop as early as kindergarten. Parental factors such as interest in child's school work, control of television watching and facilitation of homework, all contributed to student achievement more than school factors. Parents often reinforce gender type play activity (boys playing with blocks, girls playing with dolls); this may relate to differences in preference for physics versus biology. Family

interaction at a museum may also contribute to science decisions. It was found that while visiting a science museum, mothers were often led by their children or husbands in choosing an exhibit, but fathers decided which exhibit to view and lead discussions about the exhibit.

Serbin and others (1990) focused their study on the socialization of sex-differentiated skills and academic performance. Their sample consisted of three hundred forty-seven elementary school children. The girls' academic performance was overall greater than the boys. This can be attributed to the fact that girls respond better to social cues and comply with adult direction more often than boys. Results also indicated that the development of specific cognitive and social skills play an important role in creating gender differences in academic performance. The authors also believe that at the elementary level, being able to sit quietly and respond to teacher-directed structure is a predictor of success. In contrast however, problem solving skills necessary for higher level achievement may be acquired through play with toys that utilize visual-spatial skills. These toys are mostly used by boys. During the high school years there is a shift to boys performing highly compared to girls. From this examination, it can be said that socialization practices discriminate against both genders, resulting in sex-differentiated achievement patterns starting in elementary through the university level. Both males and females can benefit from experiences that enhance the development of cognitive and social skills needed for academic success.

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Appendices

Teacher Questionnaire

1. Who do you think are generally better readers? Better meaning reads fluently and comprehension level is above average?

   boys girls both

2. Think about your class this year. What is the total number of students?

   How many boys would you say are better readers? Girls?

3. Do you think the books used in your classroom are gender biased?

4. Who do you call on more frequently?

   boys girls both

Student Questionnaire

1. Who do you think is better at reading? boys girls

both

2. Who do you think behaves better in class? boys girls

both

3. Who do you think gets in trouble more by your teacher? boys

girls both

4. Do you like to read or hear stories about girls who are heroes?

yes no sometimes

5. Do you like to read or hear stories about boys who are heroes?

yes no sometimes

6. Do you think it is okay for a girl to play sports?

yes no sometimes

7. Do you think it is okay for a boy to take dance lessons?

yes no sometimes

Observer's Form

Reading/Language Arts

Date:

Total boys # Total girls #

1. Did the literature used have a male or female main character?

2. Was the main character portrayed as weak or in any way related to being weak at the start of story?

3. Did the main character change by the end of the story to be strong or in any way related to strong?

4. How many times were male pupils called upon?

5. How many times were female pupils called upon?

6. How many times were male pupils reprimanded?

7. How many times were female pupils reprimanded?